

WORK SESSION OF THE GREENBELT CITY COUNCIL held Wednesday, August 8, 2012, for the purpose of meeting with the Greenbelt Post Office.

Mayor Davis started the meeting at 8:00 p.m. It was held in the Multipurpose Room of the Community Center.

PRESENT WERE: Councilmembers Konrad E. Herling, Emmett V. Jordan, Leta M. Mach, Silke I. Pope, Edward V.J. Putens, Rodney M. Roberts and Mayor Judith F. Davis.

STAFF PRESENT WERE: Michael P. McLaughlin, City Manager; Mark Perlman, Maryland Municipal League Intern; and Cindy Murray, City Clerk.

ALSO PRESENT WERE: Charnee Humphries, Greenbelt Postmaster; Donalda Moss, Manager of Delivery and Customer Service for the Capital District; Sean Henderson, Greenbelt News Review; Laura Kressler and Bill Orleans.

Welcome and Introductions

Following introductions, Charnee Humphries announced she had been assigned as Postmaster to the Greenbelt Post Office four months ago. She thanked Council for the opportunity to meet with them.

Customer Service Issues

Ms. Pope reported her 2010 third class mail election material that had been dropped off in plenty of time for pre-election delivery, was not delivered until after the election. She also commented on the poor customer service she received from staff at the Post Office when inquiring about the problem, including the lack of response to numerous messages left for the Postmaster to contact her.

Mr. Putens reported his first class mail election materials that were dropped off at the Greenbelt Post Office for local delivery a week before the 2010 election took five days to be delivered.

Ms. Humphries said it was unacceptable and unexplainable that first class mail was not delivered locally the following day. She said since her arrival in Greenbelt, all first class local mail received at the post office is processed that day and delivered the following day, and third class mail is delivered in three to five working days. Ms. Humphries suggested that she be notified prior to the next election that election materials would be coming through the facility and she would monitor the delivery situation. She added the only reasonable excuse for not delivering the mail timely would be a safety issue, such as broken steps, animals, etc.

Ms. Mach mentioned several instances in the past when mail had been delivered to the wrong address and pieces of mail had been found dropped on the ground several streets away from the intended recipient. She added that the situation has improved in the last month. Mr. Putens and Ms. Pope reported on instances where books of checks were delivered to the wrong addresses even though they had been addressed correctly.

Mayor Davis questioned why non-forwardable election mail is often returned months after the election. Ms. Humphries explained the postal forwarding system process that includes sending local non-deliverable mail in Greenbelt to another facility. She added that every effort is taken to deliver the mail to the intended recipient and it often takes time before it is deemed non-forwardable.

Ms. Pope complimented Ms. Humphries that the customer service wait time at the Post Office had significantly improved recently. She also mentioned the prompt service she received for a broken post office box lock at her residence.

Ms. Humphries announced 301-446-6302 was a new phone number for the Post Office.

Staffing Concerns

Mayor Davis and Mr. Putens said they had heard complaints about postal carriers being overworked and Mr. Putens said he had observed postal employees delivering mail at 11 p.m. several times late in 2011. Mayor Davis questioned whether there was adequate staffing. Ms. Humphries said based on Post Office projections, they were adequately staffed. Noting that she had only been in Greenbelt a few months, Ms. Humphries said she was unsure what had happened in 2011 but said there are instances when the post office may be short staffed due to employee injuries, absences, etc. Both Ms. Humphries and Ms. Moss stressed that improvements have been made and carriers are now in by 6 p.m.

Landscaping/Storm Water Retention Pond

Ms. Humphries reported that landscaping around the Post Office is currently contracted out but expected it will be handled in-house in the future. Mayor Davis said that all the original trees around the storm water retention pond are gone. Mr. Putens said he thought the County was responsible for the pond maintenance. Mr. McLaughlin will check.

Increase in Postage Rates/Reduction of Service

Ms. Humphries said rate increases are determined by the Postal Rate Commission and postal employees find out at the same time as the general public. Ms. Moss said postal facilities in small communities may have a reduction in service hours but post offices in larger communities will not be affected.

Other Issues

Mr. Jordan said additional lighting is needed for patrons accessing their post office boxes during evening/night hours. Ms. Humphries said lighting improvements are currently being made.

Mr. Jordan said he had observed individuals distributing informational materials outside the Post Office and questioned whether this was allowed. Ms. Humphries said no and asked patrons to report this to staff if observed.

Mr. Herling asked if improvements were needed to public transportation for patrons of the Post Office. Ms. Humphries said she felt the bus stops at Ora Glen Drive and Hanover Parkway are convenient to most individuals. She added that challenged individuals can arrange for postal pickup at their homes, along with an assortment of other postal services such as mail hold, change of address, etc., by contacting 1-800-275-8777 or usps.com.

Council thanked Ms. Humphries and Ms. Moss for attending.

Informational Items

Ms. Murray briefed Council on the Greenbelt Ethics Commission Report 2012-1 regarding the size of the committee. Council requested a work session be scheduled with the Ethics Commission to discuss the report.

The meeting ended at 9:40 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

*Cindy Murray
City Clerk*